

Message Text

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12

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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P R 140840Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1448

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USUN NEW YORK 71

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1955

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNGA, XF, SY

SUBJ: PALESTINIAN ITEM - UNGA

REF: STATE 200135 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL ARRIVED AFTER MEETING SEPTEMBER 12 WE HAD REQUESTED WITH ACTING FONMIN RAFI'I TO DISCUSS VARIOUS UN ISSUES. AT CONCLUSION THAT MEETING RAFI'I ADVISED AMBASSADOR THAT SYRIAN AMBASSADOR KABBANI HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED RAISE SUBJECT OF PALESTINIAN ITEM IN UNGA WITH DEPARTMENT SOONEST. RAFI'I STATED SYRIA HOPED US WOULD ASSIST ON INSCRIPTION OF ITEM ON UN AGENDA. SYRIA EXPECTS INSCRIPTION OF THIS ITEM TO ACCELERATE CONSIDERATION OF PALESTINIAN ISSUE AT UN AND GENERALLY "ASSIST PROGRESS OF PEACEFUL RESOLUTION MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT." HE HIMSELF HAD NOT YET SEEN DRAFT RESOLUTION.

2. AMBASSADOR REPLIED OUR CONCERN WAS TO AVOID ANY DEBATE
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ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUE WHICH WOULD TEND FREEZE POSITIONS OF

PARTIES AND FRUSTRATE CONTINUATION OF SECRETARY'S EFFORTS
AT STEP-BY-STEP PROGRESS IN MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS.

3. AMERICAN DESK OFFICER HAMOUD SHOUFFI RAISED SAME SUBJECT
WITH EMBOFF IN SEPARATE MEETING SAME DAY GIVING FOLLOWING
RATIONALE. IT IMPORTANT FOR SYRIA IN PARTICULAR, BUT ALSO
FOR OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS, THAT PALESTINIANS BE GIVEN FORUM
IN WHICH TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS. MODERATE PALESTINIAN VOICES
WERE GROWING LOUDER AND NEEDED THIS TYPE OF INTERNATIONAL
RECOGNITION TO INCREASE THEIR CONTROL OVER THE PALESTINIAN
MOVEMENT. SHOUFFI ASSERTED US AND OTHER WESTERN GOVERNMENTS
WERE NOT BEING ASKED TO UNDERTAKE ANY POLICY CHANGES OR MAKE
ANY MAJOR COMMITMENT TO PALESTINIANS. INSCRIPTION WOULD
ALLOW THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO ADOPT NEW LINE THAT WHILE THEY
SUPPORT THE PALESTINIANS, TIME HAS ARRIVED FOR THE PALESTINIANS
TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. SHOUFFI ARGUED THAT INSCRIPTION
WOULD SPECIFICALLY RELIEVE SYRIA OF RESPONSIBILITY PRESENTING
PALESTINIAN POINT OF VIEW TO THE WORLD AND THEREBY GIVE DAMASCUS
"GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION."

5. HE NOTED THAT IMPORTANT POINT WAS THAT PALESTINIANS WIN
UN FORUM, WHETHER THAT BE IN POLITICAL COMMITTEE OR GA.
SHOUFFI BELIEVES DETAILS OF HANDLING PALESTINIAN ITEM REMAIN
TO BE WORKED OUT BY ARAB SUMMIT IN LATE OCTOBER. US COULD
BE ASSURED, HOWEVER, ARAB GOVERNMENTS SHARED AMERICAN
CONCERN THAT MIDDLE EAST DEBATE NEITHER JEOPARDIZE
PROGRESS MADE THUSFAR OR COMPLICATE ADDITIONAL STEPS TO BE
TAKEN IN COMING MONTHS TOWARD PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT MIDDLE
EAST SITUATION.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY FINDS SHOUFFI PITCH INTRIGUING, IF
NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCING, THAT INSCRIPTION OF ITEM WOULD
HELP SYRIA DROP PALESTINIAN BURDEN IT HAS SHOULDERED SO LONG
AND SO VIGOROUSLY.
MURPHY

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